United Nations A/C.1/50/PV.12

General Assembly
Fiftieth session

Official Records

First Committee
12th Meeting
Friday, 27 October 1995, 10 a.m.
New York

Chairman: Mr. Erdenechuluun ..... (Mongolia)

The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

Observance of Disarmament Week

The Chairman: The First Committee is holding this special meeting in observance of Disarmament Week, which began on 24 October 1995. In so doing we are continuing a tradition that was established by the General Assembly at its tenth special session, the first special session devoted to disarmament. It is a great honour and privilege for me to preside over this special meeting, the establishment of which was initially proposed by my own country, Mongolia, at that special session.

I have the pleasure and honour to warmly welcome to the First Committee on this special occasion His Excellency Mr. Freitas do Amaral, President of the General Assembly. Permit me, Sir, on behalf of the entire membership of the Committee as well as on my own behalf, to congratulate you not only on your election as President of the General Assembly at its fiftieth session but also on your diplomatic skills and the great effectiveness with which you are discharging the high responsibilities entrusted to you.

I also have the distinct honour and pleasure of welcoming to the First Committee Mr. Marrack Goulding, Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs on this special occasion.

With the indulgence of the Committee I should like to make a short statement as the presiding officer of this body.

In the Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, the Assembly proclaimed a week devoted to fostering the objectives of disarmament. The Assembly urged Governments and non-governmental organizations to make Disarmament Week the centre-piece of their efforts in order to increase public awareness of the dangers of the arms race, especially the nuclear arms race, in order to create a better climate to sustain progress in disarmament.

In this context I should like to add that the observance of Disarmament Week can also play a major role in developing a strong public awareness in favour of strengthening the multilateral bodies which deal with arms limitation and disarmament issues.

I express my fervent hope that the successful conclusion of the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) this year and the indefinite extension of the Treaty will help to strengthen its effective implementation and speed progress towards the ultimate goal of the complete elimination of nuclear weapons.

This historic decision has, in my view, highlighted the importance of implementing other follow-up instruments pertaining to nuclear non-proliferation, such as a comprehensive test-ban treaty, the cut-off of fissile materials, the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones, security assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States, and other such subjects.

In this connection I should like to state that an early conclusion of an effective and verifiable comprehensive

95-86462 (E)

This record contains the original texts of speeches delivered in English and interpretations of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to original speeches only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, Room C-178. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

test-ban treaty by 1996 would be fundamental to real progress towards the ultimate goal of complete nuclear disarmament and to the security of non-nuclear-weapon States. Moreover, the tireless efforts of the Ad Hoc Committee of the Conference on Disarmament to negotiate a non-discriminatory, multilateral and effectively verifiable treaty prohibiting the production of fissile material is also a crucial element in strengthening the cause of nuclear disarmament.

In view of the considerable difference of opinion between the nuclear and the non-nuclear States, the issue of the peaceful transfer of nuclear technology for peaceful purposes is another topic that deserves the urgent attention of the international community, and it is important to make sure that the legitimate requirements for technology transfer for development purposes should not be overlooked.

A joint effort by the international community is also warranted in order to find an arrangement to allay the concerns of non-nuclear-weapon States regarding the use or threat of the use of nuclear weapons. I believe that there should be no delay in making such assurances, especially to those States that have pledged fully and unconditionally to renounce the possession and acquisition of nuclear weapons. I should like to add that such a security assurance may also help to discourage many non-nuclear-weapon States that possess a certain level of nuclear ability from considering the development of nuclear technology for other than peaceful purposes.

The entry into force of the Chemical Weapons Convention, along with the Biological Weapons Convention and the NPT, will certainly complete the triad of global treaties concerning weapons of mass destruction. It is my hope that Member States will maintain the momentum towards the ratification and entry into force of the Chemical Weapons Convention at an early date. I also strongly support the efforts under way to improve the implementation of the Biological Weapons Convention in the near future.

As members of the Committee are aware, there have been encouraging developments over past years which demonstrate the interaction between the global and the regional dimensions of arms control and disarmament. In this connection the successful conclusion of the meeting of the Organization of African Unity which approved the final text of a draft treaty on the denuclearization of Africa is a welcome success that, no doubt, will advance global norms.

The question of the misuse of land-mines is a matter of great humanitarian concern, as land-mines continue to inflict terrible suffering upon civilian populations. I hope that the Protocol related to land-mines will be further strengthened at the reconvened sessions of the Review Conference on certain conventional weapons next year.

Regarding the subject of international arms transfers, especially the question of the illicit transfer of conventional arms, I wish to say that there is general agreement among Member States that the increasing trend towards illicit arms trafficking has a destabilizing impact on international peace and security. Therefore it is imperative, in my view, for the international community to explore ways and means, through coordinated national and international strategies, to reverse this trend.

The issues to which I have just referred in my short statement are a few major subjects, among other things, that the international community has been dealing with over the past several years. Of course this does not mean that other issues of concern are of lesser importance to the world community.

I should like to conclude my statement by saying that during this special Week a series of events are being held around the world with a view to raising, as I said earlier, the global community's awareness of disarmament issues. In today's world of growing interdependence the unique role of the United Nations in promoting cooperation to resolve problems is becoming all the more prominent and all the more important. This is particularly true in the field of disarmament.

I now call on the President of the General Assembly, His Excellency Mr. Freitas do Amaral.

Mr. Freitas do Amaral (President of the General Assembly): I should like to being by thanking you, Sir, for your kind remarks and congratulations.

Earlier this week I had the great privilege of presiding over an unparalleled historic event — a summit meeting of world leaders gathered in the General Assembly to render homage to the achievements of multilateralism and globalism embodied in the United Nations. One of the themes that echoed throughout the 200 statements made at the highest political level was that our Organization is irreplaceable, although after 50 years it needs strengthening and reform to be ready for the new challenges ahead. The fact that so many Heads of State and Heads of Government were present at the General Assembly's commemoration of

the fiftieth anniversary of the Organization's founding is a testimony to how the United Nations and its many agencies continue to touch the lives of millions of people around the world.

That wide support, expressed at the highest political level, should be translated into initiatives and followed by practical actions in all domains of endeavour of the United Nations. During the last 50 years the United Nations has always considered disarmament one of its highest priorities, because the Organization was born of the experience of the Second World War and in the same year as the first use of nuclear weapons. Since 1945, the United Nations has spared no effort to give full effect to the relevant provisions of the Charter which call for the establishment and the maintenance of international peace and security, with the least diversion for armaments of the world's human and economic resources.

At that time, specific responsibilities were conferred on the Security Council and the General Assembly in connection with arms control and disarmament. In particular, the General Assembly was empowered by Article 11 of the Charter to consider principles governing disarmament and the regulation of armaments and to make

> "recommendations with regard to such principles to the Members or to the Security Council or to both".

In implementing as far as possible that mandate during the past half-century, the Organization has unremittingly promoted disarmament initiatives, especially through the activities of the First Committee of the General Assembly.

Disarmament Week, declared by the first special session devoted to disarmament, in 1978, commemorates those achievements. I have come to this special meeting, as other Presidents have done before me, to underline the importance that the Assembly attaches to the work done in the field of disarmament, and particularly in the First Committee, and to reiterate the importance of promoting international security and disarmament.

The focus of disarmament nowadays is multilateral in nature, more comprehensive in terms of issues, and both global and regional in thrust. Progress in disarmament can help to create the environment that is essential for the settlement of disputes, peacemaking and peace-building initiatives, as well as for the promotion of democracy and the sustainable development of societies.

The work of the representatives of Member States in the First Committee is part of a process that encompasses multilateral approaches to new as well as unresolved problems challenging international security. Though the threat of a nuclear conflagration has now receded, nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction are still with us. Profound threats and challenges confront us on a daily basis: among these are the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction; the contamination of the environment from such weapons and their components; and the threats to international security caused by the smuggling of nuclear materials and the risk of their falling into the hands of terrorists. Those threats demand global cooperation.

In May this year, the world was made a safer place by the agreement of 175 States to extend indefinitely the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and thereby to strengthen the international nuclear non-proliferation regime. Global efforts in this field will continue in 1997, when the parties will review the operation of the Treaty.

Contributing to this trend, negotiations on a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty are under way in Geneva. Although active, the pace of these negotiations must be accelerated in order to meet the demands of the entire world community for the long-awaited treaty to be concluded by 1996.

The entry into force of the Chemical Weapons Convention would enhance security worldwide. It is therefore crucial that all States make the utmost effort to ratify that Convention as soon as possible.

The negotiations aimed at establishing a regime for the verification of compliance with the Biological (Bacteriological) Weapons Convention are of the greatest importance. Their eventual success would reassure humankind of the determination of all Governments to strengthen the implementation of the permanent ban on those weapons.

While efforts to remove the menace of weapons of mass destruction must be unrelenting, the international community is still seeking its rightful place in controlling, reducing and eliminating the tools of war that have killed millions of human beings since the end of the Second World War.

Just this month the Review Conference on the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons registered a certain amount of progress in negotiations related to

strengthening prohibitions and restrictions on the use of anti-personnel land-mines, booby-traps and other devices. In addition, a very important result was the adoption of an additional Protocol to the Convention, on blinding laser weapons. The negotiations will resume at the beginning of next year in Geneva, and I fervently hope that they will be successfully concluded as soon as possible. Land-mines are another threat to economic and social recovery in certain regions of the globe, and I believe we cannot disregard the momentum to appeal to those States that have not yet done so to become parties to the Convention.

Regional efforts must also be pursued. The geographical area covered by the existing nuclear-weapon-free zones established by the Treaties of Tlatelolco and Rarotonga may be extended even further with the establishment of the African nuclear-weapon-free zone (Pelindaba). Indeed, one of the highlights of the fiftieth session may be the endorsement by the General Assembly of the text of the African nuclear-weapon-free zone Treaty.

Though I have only briefly alluded to some of the many items on the First Committee's agenda this year, I have attempted to focus on those that point out clearly the new and evolving elements in the disarmament agenda of the international community. I am gratified to be able to reflect for a few moments on those issues at this special meeting to mark Disarmament Week 1995. This is a moment in which to honour the achievements of the United Nations in disarmament over the last 50 years, the work of the First Committee of the General Assembly, of other multilateral bodies and agencies, and of the many intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations active in the field of disarmament and arms control.

The lives of people everywhere will be touched daily, and in a personal way, if the weapons that threaten us globally, whether regionally or subregionally, are reduced, controlled and eventually eliminated altogether through the steady adoption of meaningful measures of arms control and disarmament.

I encourage all representatives in their work in this First Committee. I thank them for their attention and wish the Committee every success during this session.

The Chairman: I thank the President of the General Assembly, His Excellency Mr. Freitas do Amaral, for his important statement.

It is now my pleasure to call on the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, Mr. Marrack Goulding.

Mr. Goulding (Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs): I again congratulate you, Mr. Chairman, on your election to the chairmanship of this very important Committee. I would like to join you in welcoming the President of the General Assembly who has miraculously found time in his very heavy schedule to participate in this meeting of the First Committee, which is traditionally devoted to the observance of Disarmament Week. He honours us with his presence here this morning.

You, Mr. Chairman, and you, Mr. President, have said it all. Like you, I have in front of me a statement which is a *tour d'horizon* of the achievements in the disarmament field during the last such meeting of this Committee. I am going to repeat what you said. I do not apologize for doing so because I believe that it is satisfactory to demonstrate that there is such unanimity on this podium. I addressed the First Committee less than two weeks ago. My purpose then was to describe the Secretary-General's vision of the direction which this Organization, in his view, should take with regard to the main questions of arms control and disarmament. I emphasize that Mr. Boutros-Ghali sees those main questions of arms control and disarmament as being linked to the broader concerns of international security and, by extension, to economic and social issues.

It is not possible, in his view, to address issues of conflict without simultaneously addressing their economic and social dimensions. In other words, it is necessary to integrate arms control and disarmament into the broader world agenda of peace and development. In the arms control and disarmament field, this implies an advance on two broad fronts: first, there are the familiar issues related to weapons of mass destruction. As you, Mr. President, and you, Mr. Chairman, have already pointed out this morning, considerable progress has been made on those issues. The decisions taken at this year's Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) have strengthened the non-proliferation regime. Another step forward within the last few days was the joint announcement by the Governments of France, the United Kingdom and the United States that they intend to sign the relevant Protocols to the Treaty of Rarotonga in the first half of 1996. The impending opening for signature of the African nuclear-weapon-free zone Treaty, the Pelindaba Treaty, is another source of considerable satisfaction.

The Secretary-General hopes that this impetus can be maintained and that the State Parties to the NPT will continue to cooperate in pursuit of the ultimate goal of completely eliminating nuclear weapons. In concrete terms, that means concluding quickly the negotiations on a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty (CTBT); it means an energetic effort to negotiate a treaty banning the production of fissile material for weapons purposes; and it means an effort to transform unilateral declarations on negative security assurances into legally binding treaty obligations.

On chemical weapons, the assessment is somewhat less positive. It is a matter of great concern to the Secretary-General that the Chemical Weapons Convention still needs 25 more ratifications before it can enter into force. That Convention is a model for multilateral efforts in the arms control and disarmament field. It establishes comprehensive and unambiguous prohibitions on the possession and the use of a whole category of weapons. It encompasses both destruction of stockpiles and a ban on future production. It foresees an effective verification regime within both civilian and military reach, based on the principle of cooperative implementation. Confidence-building measures, bilateral consultations and dispute settlement procedures are well designed to address concerns relating to the implementation of the Convention. I therefore reiterate the urgent appeal of the Secretary-General that all States that have not signed the Convention should sign it and that those that have signed it and have not yet ratified should ratify as soon as possible. We have, unfortunately, missed the goal of bringing the Treaty into force before the end of 1995, but we can still reach the goal of 65 ratifications before the end of 1995, which will enable the Convention to come into force before the end of the fiftieth session of the General Assembly.

Equally important are negotiations aimed at establishing an effective verification regime for the Biological Weapons Convention. The current negotiations in the Ad Hoc Group of Governmental Experts established for this purpose should be supported with the termination by all States with, again, the aim of concluding, if possible, by 1996, the task mandated by the Special Conference of the Biological Weapons Convention which was held last year.

The second front on which advance is required is conventional weapons. Those are the weapons that are destabilizing societies and which are killing people every day in numbers that make a mockery of the concept of a new world order. Because they are small and cheap and easy to produce and very, very numerous, they are inherently much more difficult to control than weapons of mass destruction and that is reflected in the fact that there is much less progress to report on this second front than on that of weapons of mass destruction. The adoption in Vienna by the Review Conference of the States Parties to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) of an additional Protocol, Protocol IV on blinding laser weapons, was a step forward. It is the first time that certain uses of a weapons system have been banned before that system is deployed. This is an important example of preventive action in the field of disarmament. It illustrates the need to assess constantly the humanitarian implications as weapons research and testing proceed. Unfortunately, however, the actual problem, the existing problem of land-mines, remains unresolved. In his message to the CCW Review Conference, the Secretary-General said that land-mines are in fact a weapon of mass destruction, a slow-motion weapon of mass destruction because over a long period of time, they kill or maim indiscriminately very large numbers of innocent civilians. The Secretary-General also stated in that message that the continuing proliferation of land-mines and the continued planting of land-mines adds, each year, two or more decades to the 1,100 years that will already be necessary to clear existing land-mines if we cannot accelerate the current rate of clearance — 1,100 years. So if we are looking for a theme to stress in this Disarmament Week in the fiftieth year of the United Nations, I would suggest that the theme to stress is the urgent need to move quickly to a ban on all land-mines and that is an objective to which the Secretary-General has committed himself.

A first step can be taken at the resumed Review Conference on the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, which suspended its session on 13 October. It will resume in Geneva from 15 to 19 January 1996 and from 22 April to 3 May 1996. I repeat that the Secretary-General believes that a major effort should be made to achieve substantial progress on the land-mine issue at that resumed Review Conference.

There are other areas in which advances can be made on the conventional-weapons front. At the global level, continued and universal support is necessary for all measures aimed at promoting transparency. Here, of course, we have in mind especially the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms, which is operated by the Centre for Disarmament Affairs. Considerable progress has been achieved and something like 90 per cent of the transfers of weapons systems in the existing categories are now reported, but fewer than half of the Member States of this Organization send in returns and the remaining 10 per

cent of transfers need to be brought within the transparency system.

The question of openness and transparency in the field of technology transfers should also be pursued with determination, but with the understanding that it is necessary to strike a balance between the need to prevent proliferation of weapons and the need to avoid obstructing the development process of countries.

At the regional level, European countries have acquired significant experience in enhancing openness and transparency. The Secretary-General has observed that the newly emerging cooperative security system in Europe is the product of forward-looking initiatives that have been sustained and developed for many years through negotiations based on consensus and cooperation. It is desirable that, at the regional level, other regions should develop their own confidence- and security-building measures fashioned to address the specific problems of the region concerned. The United Nations Centre for Disarmament Affairs is more than ready to provide advice, if so requested, to regional organizations or regional groups which are considering this possibility.

Indeed, important initiatives for security dialogues are being promoted in Asia, Africa and Latin America. We hope that they can be used in parallel with further developments at openness and transparency at the global level to establish a mutually reinforcing relationship between confidence- and security-building measures at the global and regional levels.

I thank the Chairman and the members of the Committee for their attention to these remarks. I would like to end by reassuring you — again assuring you — that my colleagues in the Centre for Disarmament Affairs are at the disposal of this First Committee to provide any services and to give any support that you require.

The Chairman: I thank the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs for their presence and participation in this special meeting of the Committee and celebration of Disarmament Week.

We thus close the celebratory part of our meeting.

Organization of work

The Chairman: The members of the Committee are aware that we were unable to finish our work last night and they will recall that I said I would like to make a statement on the programme of work in the days ahead. In accordance with the Committee's programme of work and timetable, the Committee will proceed to the next phase of our work, namely, structured discussion of specific subjects on the adopted thematic approach on disarmament and international security agenda items on Monday, 30 October 1995.

As you may recall, I stated at our organizational meeting on Thursday, 12 October, that, with the assistance and cooperation of the other officers of the Committee and the Secretariat, I would provide the necessary information to members of the Committee, well in advance, concerning each subject and the time allotted for its consideration.

I should like to inform the members of the Committee that after a series of consultations with individuals and groups of delegations, the officers of the Committee and I carefully reviewed the issues involved and I am now in a position to present to the First Committee, for its consideration and approval, a structured programme covering the 10 topics listed in resolution 48/87 of 16 December 1993. The programme for the next phase of the work of the First Committee, which begins on Monday, 30 October, is shown in the timetable for the structured discussions which was distributed to the members yesterday.

The timetable follows essentially the pattern adopted for this discussion last year. The only change relates to the last two subjects, namely, "International security" and "Related matters of disarmament and international security", which will be taken up together. One meeting will be allocated to them.

It is my intention, with the concurrence of the Committee, to take these 10 topics, as shown in the timetable, one by one in the order shown, beginning with the exchange of views on the first one, "Nuclear weapons", on Monday, 30 October. Two meetings will be devoted to the exchange of views on the first topic. A sufficient degree of flexibility will be maintained, to the extent possible, in dealing with these issues in our informal meetings.

I should like to suggest that as soon as a given topic has been considered, the Committee should proceed immediately, if time permits, to the consideration of, and exchange of views on, the next topic. This will certainly enable the Committee to use fully and constructively the time and conference services available for this phase of its work.

There will not be a list of speakers for the informal structured discussion of specific subjects. Delegations wishing to participate in the informal exchange of views are requested to signify from the floor when they would like to make a statement.

If there are no comments on or objections to the timetable proposed, I shall take it that the Committee wishes to adopt the timetable before it.

It was so decided.

The Chairman: I should like to inform the Committee that, following extensive consultations with individual delegations and groups of delegations, the officers of the Committee have concluded that the Committee's work has been considerably improved and rationalized in the course of the past several years. Therefore they believe that there is no need, this year at least, to discuss further the question of the rationalization of the work of the Committee. The Committee could take up the issue of rationalization of its work, if it wishes to do so, next year or on a biennial or triennial basis.

I should therefore like to suggest that the Committee defer the consideration of agenda item 79, namely "Rationalization of the work and reform of the agenda of the First Committee". If the Committee concurs in that suggestion, based on the Bureau's recommendation, I would request the Secretariat to revise the Committee's programme of work and timetable, given in document A/C.1/50/2, accordingly and to circulate the revision to the Committee as soon as possible. If I hear no objection, it will be so decided.

It was so decided.

The Chairman: I should also like to inform the Committee that the officers of the Committee will submit a short draft decision under agenda item 79 requesting *inter alia* the inclusion of the item entitled "Rationalization of the work and reform of the agenda of the First Committee" in the agenda of the fifty-first session of the General Assembly or of a later session.

The meeting rose at 11 a.m.

United Nations A/C.1/50/PV.13

General Assembly
Fiftieth session
Official Records

First Committee

13th Meeting
Monday, 6 November 1995, 10 a.m.
New York

Chairman: Mr. Erdenechuluun . . . . . (Mongolia)

The meeting was called to order at 11.05 a.m.

Tribute to the memory of His Excellency Mr. Yitzhak Rabin, the late Prime Minister of the State of Israel

The Chairman: It was with shock and great sadness that members of the First Committee learned of the assassination of His Excellency Mr. Yitzhak Rabin, the late Prime Minister of Israel. I am sure that I am expressing the sentiments of everyone here when I say that Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin will be remembered for the distinguished leadership he gave to his country and as a staunch fighter for peace and security in the Middle East.

I wish on behalf of the members of the First Committee to extend our heartfelt condolences to the delegation of Israel upon the tragic and untimely demise of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and to request the Israeli delegation to convey our sentiments to the Government and the people of Israel and to the bereaved family.

I ask members of the Committee to stand and observe a minute of silence in tribute to the memory of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin.

The members of the First Committee observed a minute of silence.

The Chairman: I now call on the representative of South Africa, Mr. Frederick Bergh, who will speak on behalf of the African States.

Mr. Bergh (South Africa): The member States of the African Group have learned with deep shock and sadness of the assassination of Mr. Yitzhak Rabin, Prime Minister of Israel, this past weekend. This criminal act, which should be condemned in the strongest terms, must surely have been committed by someone who has no interest in the genuine welfare of the Israeli and Palestinian peoples. The death of Mr. Rabin is a great loss to the people of Israel and could threaten the peace process now under way in the Middle East.

The African Group urges all the parties to the Middle East peace process not to be deterred by this tragic incident but to draw strength from the firm belief that the legacy of Mr. Rabin's leadership would best be honoured by following the course set by him.

Member States of the African Group convey their condolences to the Rabin family and to the people and Government of Israel.

The Chairman: I now call on the representative of Brunei Darussalam, Mr. Haji Jemat, who will speak on behalf of the Asian States.

Mr. Jemat (Brunei Darussalam): On behalf of the Asian Group I have the honour to join my colleagues in expressing our most profound sympathy and condolences to the family of the late Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, and to the people of Israel. Israel has lost an outstanding leader and a man of peace. It is sad to witness once again a man and a leader of such courage becoming a victim of the violence that we have seen for so long in the Middle East.

I am sure that I am expressing the feelings of members of the Asian Group when I say that the sacrifice

95-86528 (E)

This record contains the original texts of speeches delivered in English and interpretations of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to original speeches only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, Room C-178. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

of the late Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin will not have been in vain. His untimely death should be a reminder to all concerned of the urgency of achieving a comprehensive and lasting peace in the troubled region.

The Chairman: I now call on the representative of Poland, Ambassador Dembiński, who will speak on behalf of Eastern European States.

Mr. Dembiński (Poland): On behalf of the Eastern European Group I should like to express our profound shock, sadness and grief at the murder of the great Israeli statesman and leader, Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin. He leaves an indelible mark on the international scene. His contribution to the peace process in the Middle East is immeasurable. I should like to ask the delegation of Israel to convey our sentiments and sincere condolences to the Government and people of Israel and the family of the deceased.

The Chairman: I now call on the representative of Bolivia, Mr. Gualberto Rodríguez, who will speak on behalf of the Latin American and Caribbean States.

Mr. Rodríguez (Bolivia) (*interpretation from Spanish*): Allow me, on behalf of the countries of the Latin American and Caribbean Group, to express our sincere condolences at the tragic death of the Prime Minister of Israel, Mr. Yitzhak Rabin. The assassination of this outstanding leader deprives the international community of a leader who was dedicated to the cause of world peace. The circumstances of his death reveal, moreover, the intolerance and intransigence of groups of radicals opposed to building a society in Gaza based on the ideals of solidarity and understanding.

This crime has shaken the entire world — Governments, political analysts, the press and the man in the street — because Prime Minister Rabin was the incarnation of the search for paths towards reconciliation and bringing peoples closer together. He sought courageous and new solutions for peace in the Middle East.

The pain caused by the passing of Prime Minister Rabin commits the political will of the entire world to the process of fundamental transformation initiated by Mr. Rabin so as to achieve peace at last in the region and in the world. May God keep this outstanding statesman in His care and let us have greater understanding among men.

The Chairman: I now call on the representative of Norway, Ambassador Hans Jacob Bjørn Lian, who will speak on behalf of the Western European and Other States.

Mr. Bjørn Lian (Norway): Members of the Group of Western European and Other States were deeply shocked and profoundly saddened at the news of the assassination of the Prime Minister of Israel, Mr. Yitzhak Rabin. We all condemn this despicable act of violence. Israel and the world have lost a great statesman and a visionary leader. Prime Minister Rabin showed great personal courage and determination in his search for a just and lasting peace in the Middle East. He was the main architect of the peace process, which he again praised and promoted on the last day of his life, minutes before he was killed.

We all remember that only a year ago Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin received the Nobel Peace Prize. He received that prize for his considerable efforts and for the considerable courage he showed in bringing the peace process forward. Now, on the day of the burial of Prime Minister Rabin, we all feel the necessity of continuing his work towards peace. That is his legacy and that is our responsibility.

On this day our thoughts and sympathy go to his family, to the people of Israel and to all those who had faith in Yitzhak Rabin's mission.

The Chairman: I now call on the representative of Israel, Ambassador Yativ, to make a statement.

Mr. Yativ (Israel): November 4, 1995 is a day that will live in the memory of Israel, its neighbours and the international community for ever: on that day an assassin's bullet killed the Prime Minister of Israel, Mr. Yitzhak Rabin.

The bullet was not meant for the man himself. The bullet was an attempt to stop the courageous march towards peace for all peoples of the Middle East. In the words of Yitzhak Rabin himself in his last speech at the peace rally in Tel Aviv:

> "I was a military man for 27 years. I fought so long as there was no chance for peace. I believe that there is now a chance for peace."

The Government of Israel is fully committed to continue its efforts to reach a comprehensive and lasting peace with all of its neighbours. It is our obligation — the obligation of us in the Middle East and of the international

community — to make sure that Prime Minister Rabin's vision will not be lost. An assassin's bullet will not halt our efforts to achieve what Prime Minister Rabin had so boldly set out to accomplish.

In Prime Minister Rabin's speech to the General Assembly on 24 October 1995 he said:

> "The road is still long. However, we are determined to continue until we have brought peace to the region, for our children and our children's children and for all the peoples of the region. This is our mission. We will fulfil it." (*Official Records of the General Assembly, Fiftieth Session, Plenary Meetings, 39th meeting, p. 26*)

Let these words inspire us in our journey towards peace.

Agenda items 57 to 81 (*continued*)

Consideration of draft resolutions submitted under all disarmament and international security agenda items

The Chairman: In accordance with the Committee's programme of work and timetable, this morning the Committee will proceed to the next phase of its work, namely, the consideration of draft resolutions submitted under agenda items 57 to 81.

In this connection I should like to point out that today's meetings, as well as those scheduled for Tuesday, 7 November, and Wednesday, 8 November, are to be devoted to the introduction of draft resolutions and to comments on them.

The Committee will now begin its consideration of draft resolutions submitted under all disarmament and international security agenda items.

I call first on the representative of the United States who will introduce the draft resolution on the moratorium on the export of anti-personnel land-mines (A/C.1/50/L.45).

Mr. Inderfurth (United States of America): May I begin by saying that Ambassador Albright had intended to be here this morning to deliver the statement of the United States introducing the draft resolution on anti-personnel land-mines (A/C.1/50/L.45). However, because of the tragic events of this weekend she is not here. She is in Jerusalem with President Clinton and leaders from around the world attending the funeral of Yitzhak Rabin, Prime Minister and peacemaker. We grieve at his loss and express our greatest sympathies to the family and the people of Israel. It is a very sad day for all of us.

I am pleased to have this opportunity today to introduce this important draft resolution calling for States to adopt moratoriums on the export of anti-personnel land-mines. These hidden killers inflict indiscriminate horror on civilians. In Cambodia, for example, it is impossible to walk down a street in Phnom Penh without seeing a child using a makeshift crutch or wagon to get from place to place.

Anti-personnel land-mines have become the coward's weapon of choice. They are simple to lay but difficult to destroy or detect. More and more they are used not to limit the movements of an opposing army but as weapons of terror and economic war. They are weapons of mass destruction in slow motion. Long after the conflict is over these weapons often continue to kill and maim, wreaking havoc for years to come.

As is known, draft resolution A/C.1/50/L.45, which I am introducing today, is one of high priority for my Government because it represents an important element in the overall effort to address and ultimately put an end to the pain and suffering caused by anti-personnel land-mines.

Over the past few years the United States, in partnership with many other Governments, has been engaged in a continuous, multifaceted approach to the problems caused by land-mines. In July we worked closely with the United Nations to hold the unprecedented International Meeting on Mine Clearance in Geneva, which was attended by representatives from more than 90 countries. The United States delegation to that meeting was led by former Secretary of State Cyrus Vance.

Discussions were held on global de-mining needs and operational priorities, funds were raised at the meeting for ongoing United Nations de-mining operations, and I am pleased to tell the Committee that the United States pledged $12.5 million. Yet our involvement in Geneva only complemented our continuous support for de-mining assistance programmes in Asia, Africa and Central America. In fact, in the last year we have spent about $46 million for global de-mining assistance.

In March the United States deposited its instrument of ratification of the Convention on conventional weapons,

thus ensuring that we would be a full party at the September Review Conference in Vienna. Much to our regret, however, delegations to the Conference could not achieve consensus on key issues relating to the strengthening of the restrictions in the land-mines Protocol and so the Conference was recessed. None the less, progress was made and we are confident that the necessary consensus will be achieved when the Conference reconvenes in January.

In support of this objective, the United States has already agreed to co-sponsor the draft resolution on the Convention on conventional weapons, which will be introduced by Sweden.

The United States, together with the United Kingdom, has also developed a proposal for an anti-personnel land-mine control programme. As a first step the control programme would impose restrictions on the production, stockpiling and transfer of anti-personnel land-mines. We plan to pursue this control programme to complement and reinforce the Convention on conventional weapons and we look forward ultimately to broad participation in the programme.

In addition to these efforts, the United States, together with more than 25 other States, has adopted moratoriums on the export of anti-personnel land-mines. The United States first adopted an export moratorium in 1992, with Senator Patrick Leahy of Vermont taking a leadership role, a role he continues to exert in dealing with the world-wide land-mine crisis.

As can be seen, we have tried in earnest to address the humanitarian tragedy caused by anti-personnel land-mines, and in many ways we have been quite successful, but much more needs to be done. It is for this reason that we are again introducing this draft resolution in the First Committee. Building on the momentum of the past two years the draft resolution calls on Governments to adopt moratoriums on the transfer of anti-personnel land-mines and to take concrete steps leading to the eventual elimination of such weapons, a goal first proposed by President Clinton in his statement to the General Assembly last year, and reaffirmed by the President a few short weeks ago.

According to the draft resolution, the General Assembly would call attention to the various international efforts undertaken to confront the scourge of land-mines. In this respect it would highlight the importance of the Convention on conventional weapons as the authoritative international instrument governing the use of anti-personnel land-mines and urge all States to comply with its applicable rules.

Finally, the text underscores the horrible toll taken on civilian populations as a result of anti-personnel land-mines. It notes that according to the Secretary-General there are an estimated 110 million land-mines in the ground in more than 60 countries. It further notes that between 2 million and 5 million new land-mines are laid each year, but that only about 100,000 were cleared in 1994. As these statistics make painfully clear, the global land-mine problem continues to worsen at an alarming rate.

My delegation met last week with representatives from States where the land-mine crisis has ruined lives and torn countries apart. From them the message was clear: action is needed now. While this draft resolution is far from being a cure-all, it is an important and necessary step in the right direction.

We must continue to work towards a world free from the human tragedy caused by anti-personnel land-mines. We must renew our commitment to clear, control and eventually eliminate these indiscriminate killers and we must act on this commitment now, today. Thus I urge my colleagues in the international community not only to support this draft resolution but also to co-sponsor it. At present we have more than 80 co-sponsors of the land-mine draft resolution. Please join us today as our numbers grow, thus showing further international support and momentum for dealing with this world-wide humanitarian crisis.

Organization of work

The Chairman: I do not have any other delegation listed as wishing to speak at this stage. Does any other delegation wish to introduce draft resolutions or make statements on them? There seem to be none.

As representatives may recall, the Committee at its sixth informal meeting, held on Thursday, 2 November, informally decided to extend the deadline for submission of draft resolutions under all disarmament and international security agenda items from Friday, 3 November, to today, Monday, 6 November, at 12 noon.

After having consultations with interested delegations, the Chair, at the request of certain delegations, wishes to state that the deadline for submission of draft resolutions could be postponed until 4 p.m. today. Would this 4 p.m. deadline meet with the approval of all delegations? The

deadline concerns all the draft resolutions that have not yet been submitted.

Mr. Akalovsky (United States of America): We heard from the Secretary of the Committee last week that further postponement of the deadline would create difficulties in terms of the reproduction and translation of the draft resolutions, given the constraints under which the Secretariat is operating nowadays. Therefore, my delegation would not be in favour of extending the deadline further.

Our impression last week was that we had a decision rather than an informal decision, but obviously from what you, Sir, have just said, we were wrong. It seems to us that we are all aware of the deadline to which we are supposed to work, and our hope is that whatever decisions we make here will stick rather than be changed every few hours as it were. If the deadline is extended to 4 p.m. I wonder whether somebody will not come and say it should be extended to 6 p.m., to tomorrow, and so forth. It seems to us, therefore, that the best thing to do would be to stick with the decision we took on Thursday.

The Chairman: I cannot agree more with what the representative of the United States has just said. However, the reality of the situation is a little different.

Mr. Goonetilleke (Sri Lanka): My delegation appreciates the steps taken by you, Sir, to extend the deadline to 12 noon and then the decision just announced by you to extend that deadline further to 4 p.m. It may be that my delegation will be in a position to submit its last draft resolution by 4 p.m., but if we are unable to do so I should like to know whether it would be possible to extend the deadline to 6 p.m. for the submission of one draft resolution on the subject of the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT).

The Chairman: Are there any further comments?

Mr. Rodríguez (Colombia) (*interpretation from Spanish*): In truth, all delegations share the concern that we should not extend the deadlines indefinitely. Unfortunately, however, in view of the special circumstance that for practically a week, our delegations were busy with the participation of Heads of State in the celebrations for the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, for many delegations the time has been so short that as a result we are now asking for an extension of the deadlines.

We would therefore request the Chairman and the Secretary to take these special circumstances into account and grant this slight extension of the deadline to 4 p.m.

As regards the extension requested by the representative of Sri Lanka, we would like to see some flexibility on that particular point. We fully understand the difficulties this causes for the Secretariat; however these are extremely important matters that have prompted us to request the greatest flexibility possible. We know that the Chairman and the Secretariat have been flexible and we would like to congratulate them and thank them for enabling all delegations to have the opportunity to submit their draft resolutions today.

The Chairman: If there are no further comments I should like to say at this point that I have been informed by the Secretariat that because of the delay and postponement of the deadline for the submission of draft resolutions the Committee might also have to postpone the action on draft resolutions.

According to our programme of work the Committee is supposed to begin action on draft resolutions on the morning of 9 November. It seems that if the deadline for the submission of draft resolutions is extended, we may have to move the beginning of the action on draft resolutions from Thursday to Friday afternoon. The Committee will be well aware that the Secretariat constraints will make it very difficult for delegations to receive the draft resolutions in good time to consider them before beginning to take action. I therefore appeal to all delegations to try to keep to the deadline of 4 p.m. today.

Mr. Akalovsky (United States of America): My delegation appreciates the difficulties that some delegations may have with the draft resolutions. My delegation is one of them. Nevertheless, we have tried to work under the deadline we agreed upon on Thursday and now I hear requests for flexibility.

I do not know what that means, really. We have heard a request for an extension until 6 p.m. As I said, somebody may come and request a delay until tomorrow, and so forth. So if we do reach an agreement today on a deadline, it should be a firm one. If there is flexibility, again there should be flexibility for everyone, but that flexibility should be defined as the time of the deadline: that is the flexibility we are given by any extension we may agree upon.

The Chairman: Certainly, I take note of the argument behind the statement of the representative of the United States, which I fully share.

With the understanding that the extension of the deadline to 6 p.m. may necessitate the postponement of the beginning of the action part on draft resolutions from Thursday to Friday afternoon, I should like to ask the Committee's approval —

I call on the representative of the United States, who wishes to speak on a point of order.

Mr. Akalovsky (United States of America): I did not mean to interrupt you, Sir, but I have a question in connection with your question as to whether the postponement of action would be agreeable to everyone.

My question is: Would that entail any prolongation of the session *per se*?

The Chairman: It may not, but I am not sure about that. We have set Monday, 20 November, for the end of the work of the First Committee. Certainly, the Bureau will try to stick to that date. In fact, I am thinking about the possibility of finishing all the disarmament items on Friday, 17 November. But of course, the postponement for the submission of draft resolutions may create difficulties for us in finishing our work on the dates we have agreed upon.

I call on the Secretary of the Committee.

Mr. Kheradi (Secretary of the Committee): I merely wish to amplify a little what the Chairman has just stated concerning the feelings of the Secretariat regarding this matter. My statement of Friday is, of course, on record and certainly, as we have always done in the past, we will do our utmost to ensure the requisite flexibility in whatever ways are possible.

However, the reason that I informed the Committee that a postponement of the action part may be necessary, it will be recalled, is that we also have the exercise of clustering the draft resolutions. Until we have received all of the draft resolutions and until they have been officially issued, it will be difficult to cluster them. The procedure, of course, involves going back to the Bureau, its perusing the entire situation and going back for any regional consultations or other consultations that may be necessary before a final decision is taken on the clustering device, which would then be distributed to the members of the First Committee.

Thus, taking all these matters and all the difficulties involved into account, it would appear, as I said, that further postponement would perhaps entail moving the beginning of the action part to Friday. Everything possible will of course be done, as you stated, Sir, to finish the work on all items by 20 November, as now scheduled, with a very solid attempt being made to finish disarmament items by 17 November, keeping in mind that one cannot guarantee that.

Mr. Akalovsky (United States of America): I am sorry to have to prolong this discussion, but the explanations just given to us by the Secretary and by you earlier, Sir, again raise doubts in my delegation about the wisdom of postponing our deadlines. Again, at least as far as my delegation is concerned — but I know this is true of some other delegations as well — we have been proceeding on the assumption that we would complete our work on 20 November. Now there is some doubt about that too, as I understand the explanation just given.

So I wonder if we should not really try to compress our work today in terms of the submission of draft resolutions until 4 p.m. at least, as you proposed earlier, Sir, to reduce the possibility of an extension of the session. Many members of delegations, I am sure, have made travel plans and other commitments elsewhere after 20 November and we might find it very difficult to work after that date. I would therefore suggest that we look at the situation more carefully and not jump to any premature or hasty decisions in terms of deadlines for draft resolutions.

Mr. Goonetilleke (Sri Lanka): I have listened with great attention to the discussion that is going on. Perhaps we can settle the issue as follows.

If there are any particular delegations having a draft resolution or two to submit, perhaps they could be afforded the opportunity to submit them by 6 p.m. today. The alternative would be for those delegations to submit their draft resolutions by 4 p.m., as suggested by you, Mr. Chairman, with the possibility of amending those draft resolutions that will involve the issuance of any number of revisions.

My proposal to push the deadline to 6 p.m. was merely to avoid issuing revisions to the draft resolutions that we may have to submit.

The Chairman: While I am of course aware that everything should be done to avoid too many revisions to

draft resolutions, the action suggested would also certainly gain time.

With that in mind, I ask the Committee's approval to extend the deadline to 6 p.m. today. If there is no objection, it is so decided.

It was so decided.

The Chairman: The deadline is now 6 p.m. and we are not going beyond that. May I remind all delegations that the draft resolutions should be submitted to the Secretary's office. This morning, of course, the Secretary and the Secretariat staff are here and they are most willing to receive the draft resolutions.

The meeting rose at 11.50 a.m.